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ARTICLE VII.

RECENT ASSYRIAN DISCOVERIES.¹

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ONE of the notable events of the present century is the recovery of the language of the Assyrians and Babylonians, together with a great deal of their history and literature, things which but little more than thirty years ago were not known to exist. The ordinary reader who looks through the popular and unpretending volume of Mr. Smith can hardly realize the labors that cuneiform scholars must have undergone, the obstacles they must have removed, or the successes they must have achieved, before it was possible that the results of their studies could be presented in such an agreeable form.

INDIFFERENCE AND EVEN HOSTILITY TO CUNEIFORM RESEARCHES.

In order to call attention briefly to the opposition which Assyrian studies met with at first, and to the incredulity of some of the most eminent scholars of thirty, twenty, or even ten years ago, matters of great interest in a historical point of view, we will quote the language of Sir Henry Rawlinson, who has been identified with the discovery and decipherment of these records and with the progress of these studies from the beginning to the present hour. In his opening address as President before the Semitic Section of the Oriental Congress, which met in London in September, 1874, he said: "Educated Europe was very slow to admit the genuineness of cuneiform decipherment. It was asserted at first as a well-

¹ Assyrian Discoveries. An Account of Explorations and Discoveries on the Site of Nineveh, during 1873 and 1874. By George Smith, of the Department of Oriental Antiquities, British Museum. With Maps and Illustrations. New York: Scribner, Armstrong, and Co. 8vo. pp. xvi. and 461. 1875.

known axiom, that it was impossible to recover lost alphabets and extinct languages without the aid of a bilingual key, such as was afforded to Egyptologists by the famous stone of Rosetta. Our efforts at interpretation were therefore pronounced to be empirical, and scholars were warned against accepting our results. I have a vivid recollection, indeed, of the scornful incredulity with which I was generally received, when, in 1849, I first brought to England a copy of the Babylonian version of the Behistun Inscription, and endeavored to show that by comparing this version with the corresponding Persian text I had arrived at a partial understanding of the newly-discovered records of Assyria and Babylonia. I did not assume to have done more than break the crust of the difficulty, and yet I obtained no attention. Hardly any one in England, except Dr. Hincks and Mr. Norris and the Chevalier Bunsen, was satisfied of the soundness of the basis of inquiry; nor, indeed, did the study make much progress for a long time afterwards. Semitic scholars like M. Renan, accustomed to the rigid forms and limited scope of alphabets of the Phœnician type, were bewildered at the laxity of cuneiform expression, where phonetic and ideographic elements were commingled; and refused to admit the possibility of such a system of writing being applied to a Semitic language. Biblical students, again, were not favorable at first to the idea of illustrating the authenticity of the Hebrew records by comparing them with the contemporary annals of a cognate people, and for a time ignored our results; while the classicists of this country who followed the lead of the late Sir George Cornewall Lewis, calmly asserted the superiority and efficiency of Greek tradition, and treated the evidences to set up a rival school of historical criticism, derived from a barbarian source, almost with contempt. Struggling thus against disbelief and prejudice, our progress in this country was for many years slow and unsatisfactory; but at length as materials increased, and competing intellects, engaged in the study of the inscriptions, arrived at almost identical results, the attention of Europe was aroused, and Assyriologists

received a more respectful treatment.”¹ In this connection it may be added as a remarkable fact that the Edinburgh Review, “which claims *par excellence* to represent the liberal party, has, from first to last, consistently disparaged the labors of Egyptologists and Orientalists, and has sought in various ways to throw ridicule, both on the studies themselves and on the results obtained from them”; and from this source, though Sir G. C. Lewis is no more, “vials of scorn have been poured upon the heads of all those who have attempted to bring into notice and popularize the new learning.” A similar state of things has existed in France “with respect to hieroglyphical and cuneiform decipherment, and the knowledge derived from them. The various stages of utter incredulity, contemptuous indifference, doubt, inquiry, surprised awakening, have been gone through; and the public at last accepts, frankly, and without *arrière pensée*, the new knowledge.”² Now, when the science of hieroglyphical and cuneiform decipherment is no longer a matter of doubt, but rests on a solid basis, the opposition from influences in high places with which it has had to contend forms a chapter in

¹ Report of the Proceedings of the Second International Congress of Orientalists, held in London in 1874, p. 6. London: Trübner and Co. 1874.

² See Article on “Early Oriental History,” in the Contemporary Review for April, 1870, pp. 81, 82. — As to the opposition referred to, the reader would be surprised at the amount of prejudice, or perhaps wilful ignorance, displayed in chapters vi. and vii., of Sir G. C. Lewis’s *Astronomy of the Ancients*, published in London in 1862, especially on pp. 368, 379 et seq., 396, 430, 431, in regard to Egyptian and Assyrian studies and their results. As a specimen, he says: “If the hieroglyphical writings which have been interpreted have been interpreted correctly, and if they may be taken as a sample of the rest, we may be satisfied that there is nothing worth knowing” (p. 396). The same spirit appears in a review of the work just mentioned in the Edinburgh Review for July, 1862; also, in a very severe and unjust criticism of Prof. George Rawlinson’s *Ancient Monarchies* in the same periodical for January, 1867. See also, in the same for July, 1870, a review of Lenormant’s and Rawlinson’s *Manuals of Ancient History*. But besides the tone of the two chapters of Mr. Lewis’s work, and of the Articles in the Edinburgh Review, their scholarship with regard to the matters under discussion make them unworthy the name of the eminent author in the one case, or of the reputation of this leading Review in the other; and the student who takes either the one or the other, or both, as a guide, is sure to be misled.

its history that is both curious and suggestive. To-day we are not only able to decipher these records, but the Christian scholar is from this source enriching his store of knowledge by a study of national histories, languages and literatures, arts and sciences, that until recent years the world had almost entirely forgotten.

THE ABUNDANCE OF MATERIALS.

In order to corroborate the remark just made we will call attention to a fact with which the general reader may not be familiar; namely, the vast body of records that have been recovered already from the Assyrian and Babylonian mounds. The original collection which came to the British Museum was broken into more than twenty thousand fragments. For convenience they were divided into different sections, as, for instance, the section of historical tablets and cylinders, the bilingual section, the mythological section, the astrological section, etc. In his recent journeys, Mr. George Smith "obtained over three thousand inscriptions and fragments of inscriptions, besides many other objects," although, owing to hinderances from the Turkish officials, the actual time that he spent in excavating fell short of four months (p. 438). We may refer also to the admirable collection in the Louvre at Paris, discovered chiefly by M. Botta at Khorsabad, and to smaller collections in different parts of Europe. Although much has been brought to light, there is a vast amount yet to be unearthed. After all that has been done in these mounds by the French and English, it can be called only a beginning of the excavations that should be made. The ruins of Kalah Shergat have never been thoroughly explored, and important records are supposed to be buried beneath them.¹ One of the most important of Mr. Smith's new discoveries came from these ruins — a fine tablet belonging to Vul-nirari I., 1350 B.C. (p. 242). Judging from his own and former excavations on the site of the library of the palace of Sennacherib at Kouyunjik, Mr. Smith estimates that there remain at least twenty thou-

¹ See North British Review, April, 1870, p. 221.

sand fragments of this valuable collection buried in the unexcavated portions (p. 452). From inscriptions which he found, he learned that Assurbanipal established a library in Babylon as well as in Assyria (p. 380); and one of the tablets from this place, written in the Turanian and Semitic-Babylonian languages, he has translated (p. 395); and when we consider the multitude of mounds which line the Tigris and Euphrates, in many of which there are doubtless valuable records, and also the fact that large libraries were established in most of the royal cities, we are justified in saying that the proper excavations are as yet hardly begun, and that untold treasures of documents, records, history, and literature really exist which ought to be gathered as a rich contribution to the general store of human knowledge. These inscriptions embrace a wide range of subjects; as, for example, mythology, lists of gods, with their titles and attributes; astrology, witchcraft, evil spirits, and fables; astronomy, including lists of eclipses and stars, and records of observations; weather records and meteorological predictions; details pertaining to the calendar, months, days, "rest" or "holy" days, the new year, and the seasons, rules for determining when the intercalary month should be added; natural history, including lists of animals, birds, minerals, and choice woods; geography, with lists of countries, seas, rivers, and mountains; the Assyrian canon, also a synchronous history of Assyria and Babylonia, together with annals of the different kings; accounts of public revenues and revenues from foreign countries; lists of titles of honor, with definitive lists of rank of all the offices and dignities of the empire from the Tartan downwards, including lawyers; the details of business, such as leases, bills of sale, deeds of land or other property, laws, contracts, notes or contracts for money or valuables loaned on interest, letters, dispatches, etc.; accounts of buildings, forts, ships with their tonnage, and the different parts of a vessel; prayers, litanies, and hymns, which read like extracts from Job or the Book of Psalms; mathematical tables, including tables of square and cube root and of fractions; also fragments of grammars,

syllabaries, vocabularies, translations from ancient works, lists of roots and verbal forms, glosses, tables of variants, grammatical exercises for the construction of short sentences, lists of phrases in two languages, and we may say, without exaggeration, many other subjects.¹

EARLY STUDIES OF MR. SMITH, AND HIS TWO VISITS TO THE EAST.

Very many of the tablets in the British Museum were incomplete, and Mr. Smith by digging on the sites where they were chiefly obtained, has been able to supply many of the missing fragments, and thus to complete texts which we already possessed in an imperfect form. For the arrangement of the broken fragments and their classification by subjects and sections, for the restoration of many imperfect inscriptions, and the addition of large amounts of new material, and for the discovery of many important facts which throw light upon Biblical and ancient history, the world is indebted to Mr. George Smith of the British Museum, whose name we have already mentioned. In the Annual Report of the Royal Asiatic Society, made in May, 1868, we find this statement: "Sir Henry Rawlinson has been occupied during the past year in preparing for publication, *with the assistance of a very promising young student, Mr. George Smith*, a third volume of the Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia" (p. xvi.). It is to the sentence which we have put in italics that we wish to call attention. In the second chapter of the work before us Mr. Smith gives an account of his independent discoveries, recognized by cuneiform scholars as discoveries of great importance, between the years 1866 and 1872. About the first year just mentioned he made the acquaintance of Mr. Rawlinson, who soon became interested in his independent researches, and proposed to the trustees of the British Museum that they employ him as his own assistant. "Thus," Mr. Smith, says, "in the beginning of 1867, I entered into

¹ George Smith's Assyrian Discoveries, 391, 406, 451, 452; Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1864-65, p. 244, note; Sayce's Assyrian Grammar, p. 18; Nichols's Handy-Book of the British Museum, pp. 233-237, note; and especially the three volumes of Cuneiform Inscriptions, published by the British Museum.

official life, and regularly prosecuted the study of the cuneiform texts" (p. 11). Notwithstanding his official position, and his occasional papers in connection with his studies, appearing chiefly in the *Zeitschrift für Aegyptische Sprache* and in the *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, and his exceedingly valuable *History of Assurbanipal*, published in 1871, which, however, owing to the nature of the subject, appealed to a very limited audience, counting together all who took any interest in it in both Europe and America, Mr. Smith remained a hard-working and obscure student until late in the year 1872, when, by his "lucky find" of the Deluge Tablets, he at once became deservedly famous. The labor required in putting together and reading these fragments of the Deluge Tablets was trifling compared with his prolonged and persevering labors of former years; still it sufficed to turn the popular attention in his direction; and as one result of this suddenly-awakened interest, the proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph* offered to advance the sum of one thousand guineas that Mr. Smith might, under leave from the British Museum, make new researches at Nineveh, in order to recover more of these interesting inscriptions (p. 14). The 20th of January, 1873, was an eventful day for this "promising young student," when he left London on a journey which was to result in very important discoveries in the Tigris and Euphrates valley. He left Mosul to return to England early in June, 1873, and arrived in London on the 19th of July. The work was at once taken up anew by the trustees of the British Museum who appropriated one thousand pounds for the purpose of continuing the explorations; and under their direction Mr. Smith left London late in November, 1873, and reached Mosul "about five in the morning of the first of January, 1874" (p. 134). On the 4th of April he started from Mosul on his return, and arrived in London on the 9th of June (p. 164). But the whole time actually spent in excavations, taking the two visits together, was, as we have before stated, less than four months. This was owing, in a small measure to the limited time and means at his disposal,

but chiefly to the obstacles thrown in his way by the Turkish officials. As Mr. Smith remarks, the Turks are not alive to their own interests (p. viii.). Nominally, the government pretends to favor explorations and archaeological researches within its own borders, but its ignorant agents hinder such efforts as far as possible. The conduct of Turkish officials in Asia who persist in opposing all real progress is a standing reproach to that nation. Mr. Smith is not the only person who has suffered from the ignorance and duplicity of such officials; and with regard to his own grievances he says: "I have stated those instances of bad conduct which I have mentioned as moderately and slightly as possible" (p. viii.). He speaks enthusiastically of "the noble work the American missions are doing in Asiatic Turkey," but shows how they need to receive constant official support from both England and America (p. viii.). Elsewhere he says: "People in England and America, who read every now and then in the papers that the Grand Vizier has issued an order for the protection of liberty of conscience and conceding justice to Christians, little know the useless character of such announcements. The grinding tyranny under which the Christians suffer, and the defiance of all solemn promises in places beyond the notice of the representatives of European powers, clearly show the nature of the Moslem rule. It is an astonishing fact that a Christian country like England upholds the Porte, and yet does not insist on justice being done to the Christians in Turkey. No end of promises are given; but any one conversant with Turkey knows the distance between promise and performance" (pp. 35, 36, 47). The officials want half of all that Mr. Smith finds, and would even break an inscription to gain it. They place a guard over him at one time, and at another forbid his excavating, and again seize his collection; and at the very last he has to give them a box in which to put smaller articles to prevent their being lost; a matter about which they seemed perfectly indifferent so long as they were certain that the proper division had been made (pp. 115, 117, 131, 137, 138, 152, 162, 163).

MR. SMITH AS A TRAVELLER.

As our object is chiefly to set before the reader the results of Mr. Smith's discoveries, we can do little more than call attention to the portion of his volume which is devoted to his travels. Between Alexandretta and Mosul he travelled mainly by one route in his four trips across the country. He calls our attention to many interesting facts connected with the country and people, and has the merit of being able to stop when he has said enough. At Biradjik he had some experience in an Oriental "police-court room." The occasion was some matter of insubordination on the part of his dragoman, which was corrected without great difficulty. But the picture of the court-room is interesting, where "all sat round the room on cushions, as is the custom in the East, and coffee and cigarettes were passed round before entering upon business" (p. 34). His attention was attracted by a "wandering holy man, or dervish, who was very dirty, very lazy, and very devout, and only interrupted his prayers to light his pipe or search for the vermin that annoyed him" (p. 111). Stopping over night at Tel Karamel, a place not far from Aleppo, "a crowd of natives came in as soon as we were settled, and stood all round us, to observe our manners and customs; and such was the curiosity of these people that they did not separate until they had seen us go to bed" (p. 32). His experiences with "backsheesh" (p. 104), with his horse that "had a queer pump-handle motion, and was inclined to drop on his knees on the slightest occasion" (pp. 115, 133), also on the wretched raft that took him from Mosul to Bagdad (p. 48), and his encounter with a remarkable woman at Dashlook, who was not only "the ruler of the village, but an inveterate smoker" (p. 112), are all interesting, if not specially new in Oriental life. His emotions when he first saw the Euphrates, by whose waters mighty empires once had their seat, and powerful monarchs had ruled (p. 33), his picture of the miles of gardens about Bagdad (p. 54), his account of the medicinal bituminous springs near Mosul — a summer resort

for its people (pp. 94, 96), of the glacial boulders along a certain portion of his route (p. 109), of the mining operations and the coal and bitumen in the Jebel Djudi, or Deluge Mountains (p. 108), and his occasional descriptions of scenery, or of the appearance of the Eastern heavens at night (p. 109), are by no means the least attractive or instructive paragraphs in his book. Attention should be called to his account of Aleppo (pp. 31, 32), and also — to come back for a moment to Europe — to his statements with regard to the Greeks of Syra, “who are active and enterprising, and are taking the lead all over the East” (p. 22).

MR. SMITH'S SERVICES AS AN ARCHAEOLOGIST.

But it is in Mr. Smith as an archaeologist, and not as a traveller, that we are chiefly interested. Everywhere he sees in this respect many things that others have overlooked. In his opinion, Biradjik is the Tul-Barsip of the Assyrian inscriptions, which was added to the Assyrian empire 856 B.C. (p. 34). Nisibin, also, now little better than a village, was a large Assyrian city, the seat of one of the governors, who took rank as an eponym; and there are extensive mounds and ruins attesting its former prosperity (p. 39). Here, also, he saw “the columns of a classical temple” (p. 110). At Orfa he finds “buildings of the Roman and Saracenic time,” and “inscriptions in Greek, Pehlevi, and Arabic, and many curious tombs cut in the rock” (p. 35). In Aleppo, “on a black, oblong stone, built into the wall of an old mosque now in ruins,” he made the important discovery of two lines, in relief, of what are called “Hamath Inscriptions,”¹ being thus named from the city where they were first discovered. The reader is doubtless aware that no clew has yet been discovered to the reading of these texts (pp. 164, 422). Then at Nisibin and elsewhere there were fine Latin inscriptions on fragments of large blocks of stone which the natives were taking from the mounds for building purposes. These inscriptions were being destroyed

¹ Are these the same as those noticed and copied by Mr. Drake, in *Burton and Drake's Unexplored Syria*, Vol. ii. pp. 185, 186?

because there was no one to look after them (p. 427). In Assurbanipal's palace at Kouyunjik were found several objects that had been brought from Cyprus, one of which had Cypriote characters upon it (p. 423); also a stone lion, with Egyptian hieroglyphics, representing the name and title of an Egyptian monarch, read by Dr. Birch as Ra-set-nub, the supposed leader of the Hyksos, and dating from about 1700 B.C. (pp. 420, 421); it was probably carried away during some conquest of Egypt by forces from the Euphrates valley. The principal foreign inscriptions discovered were Phœnician. These are contemporary with the cuneiform inscriptions, and are often found as dockets (or summaries of what the tablets contain) to the contract tablets of that period. The oldest which were found belong to the dynasty of Sargon, 722-609 B.C. One of these is a clay tablet containing a deed of sale of certain lands, with the price and the names of the buyer and seller given. This specimen is curious as illustrating the fact that witnesses often, and sometimes parties to a sale or contract, who did not possess the usual seals, were accustomed to impress their finger-nails on the document instead (p. 424). Another, dating from about 665 B.C., is in reference to the sale of some barley. And there are others of the same class (pp. 423-426). Among the tablets of the Parthian period, should be mentioned one of great interest and importance, as it fixes the date of the rise of the Parthian power, which has long been a point of doubt among chronologists. This tablet has a double date, namely, according to the Seleucian era, and according to the Parthian era also; the one hundred and forty-fourth year of the Parthians being equal to the two hundred and eighth year of the Seleucidae, thus making the Parthian era to have commenced 248 B.C. Justin and Eusebius, who are followed by Clinton, fix on the year 250 B.C.; Moses Chorenensis on two dates, 251 and 252 B.C.; and Suidas gives the year 246 B.C. This tablet, which was inscribed 105 B.C., seems to settle the question; and it is thought that proper researches at Babylon would result in discoveries which

would elucidate many other obscure points connected with Parthian history (pp. 389, 390, 449). The foregoing facts make it evident, if such evidence were necessary, how thoroughly fitted Mr. Smith is for archaeological researches outside of his special field of cuneiform inscriptions.

LATER CUNEIFORM INSCRIPTIONS.

Besides those already mentioned, Mr. Smith discovered numerous cuneiform monuments, which belong to the period between 626 B.C. and the end of the second century B.C. Most of these are dated, and we will refer to a few of them, tracing the line of history backwards for the sake of convenience. There are tablets dated according to the year of Seleucus 312 B.C. One belonging to Artaxerxes is noticed, with date corresponding to 427 B.C. Then there are several of the reign of Darius, dated, respectively, 491, 492, and 516 B.C. A peculiar black conical stone was found, with an inscription of Darius in three languages—Persian, Medo-Scythic, and Babylonian. There are others of Cambyses, dating from 525 and 528 B.C. Of the reign of Cyrus no new inscriptions were found. But there are several of Nabonidus, father of the Belshazzar of the Book of Daniel, bearing dates corresponding to 539, 540, 545, and 547 B.C. There is a tablet of Nergal-sharezer (Jer. xxxix. 3), who was a prince of Babylon in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, and ascended the throne on the death of Evil-merodach, in 560 B.C. The tablet is dated in this year. There is also one text of Nebuchadnezzar's son, Evil-merodach, who released Jehoiachim, king of Judah, from prison (2 Kings xxv. 27), which belongs to the year 561 B.C. Several small new texts of Nebuchadnezzar (605–562 B.C.) were also found, with dates corresponding to the years 568 and 585 B.C. In connection with these inscriptions, an interesting fact is brought out, which is worthy of our notice, namely, “that the kings of Assyria and Babylonia did not in general begin to count the years of their reign until the commencement of the new year following their accession.” During this fraction of a year they dated their

documents: "In the year of the accession to the kingdom of so-and-so." After the new year was past they said: "In the first year of the reign of so-and-so." This will illustrate 2 Kings xxv. 27. Besides the above, there are a few throwing some light on the last struggling years of the Assyrian empire, from 626 to 605 B.C. Part of a barrel-cylinder of Bel-zakir-iskun was found, who was probably the immediate successor of Assurbanipal, 626-620 B.C. The successor of Bel-zakir-iskun was Assur-ebil-ili-kain, a son of Assurbanipal, who reigned from 620 to 607 B.C. Several of his inscriptions were found; but they were duplicates of those already known. The fact that this king, on one of his monuments, states that when Assurbanipal died he did not ascend the throne immediately, but at a later period, leads Mr. Smith to suspect that there was civil war in Assyria about the close of the reign of Bel-zakir-iskun (pp. 381-390).

CUNEIFORM INSCRIPTIONS OF THE CLASSIC AND EARLIER PERIODS.

Mr. Smith was particularly fortunate in the discovery of new monuments which throw light on the period extending from B.C. 626 back to the twenty-third century before our era. For convenience we give from him the names and dates of the kings who flourished during the last century of the empire as follows: Tiglath Pileser II., 745-727 B.C.; Shalmaneser IV., 727-722 B.C.; Sargon, 722-705 B.C.; Sennacherib, 705-681 B.C.; Esarhaddon, 681-668 B.C.; and Assurbanipal, 668-626 B.C. Any account which we can give here will be meagre compared with the abundance of monuments which belong to the reigns of these different kings, and we must therefore content ourselves with calling attention to some of the more important facts. Assurbanipal, as is well-known, was one of the most celebrated of the Assyrian monarchs, who, in addition to his conquests and extensive building operations, was a great patron of literature, and founded libraries in different cities of his empire, in which were to be found records not only of contemporaneous history and literature, but collections of ancient documents, which reached back into the remote periods

of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Turanian times. The new monuments of this king are very numerous, some of which throw light on Egyptian affairs of that period. The long document which Mr. Smith calls "cylinder A," the text of which he has been able to correct in certain places from his new discoveries, is considered one of the finest Assyrian texts we possess, giving the official history of Assyria from the accession of Assurbanipal down to about 645 B.C. Of Esarhaddon several new and important texts were found; one of which gives an account of his conquest of Tirhakah, king of Egypt and Ethiopia, and of his terrible march through the desert to reach Meroe; and there are others which give a detailed account of his father's war in Chaldea, as well as other matters of historical interest. In connection with the new monuments which belong to Sennacherib we will call attention to one which speaks of his restoration of the city of Nineveh, because it shows of what a motley variety of nationalities the body of his workmen, who were captives, was composed. We find in this particular instance Chaldeans, Arameans, Mannians, people of Que and Cilicia, Philistines, and Tyrians (p. 208). Sennacherib, as is well known, was murdered by two of his sons, who afterwards fled into Armenia. Of Sargon there are many valuable documents. One gives us a new chapter in the politics and government of Media; another, an account of his campaign against Ashdod in 711 B.C., which strikingly illustrates and verifies Isa. xxi., and throws light upon the weakened condition of Egypt at that time, and also illustrates certain efforts which Hezekiah made for the defence of his city (p. 293). The monuments of Tiglath Pileser II. are especially valuable for the light they shed on biblical history. There are now in the British Museum five different versions of the annals of this monarch. In them we meet with the names Azaiah and Jehoahaz (Ahaz), kings of Judah; of Menahem, Pekah, and Hoshea, kings of Israel; of Rezin, king of Damascus, and of Hiram king of Tyre; as well as with many facts which confirm and elucidate the Jewish history of that period (p. 287).

The new inscriptions which belong to the early Assyrian period are quite numerous between 812 B.C. and 1320 B.C., and some go up even to the nineteenth century B.C. There are tablets of Vul-nirari III., 812 B.C.; a number of Shalmanezar II., 860 B.C.; and those of Assurnazirpal, 885 B.C.,¹ are numerous and important. The annals of Tiglath Pileser I., 1120 B.C., are partially recovered. The same is true of Assur-risilim, 1150. B.C. Also one monument of Mutaggil-nusku, 1170 B.C., was found in which he mentions his father Assur-dan I., 1200 B.C., and his grandfather Ninip-pal-eser, 1220. B.C. Then we have an important document of Tugulti-ninip I., 1271 B.C., who was one of the most memorable monarchs of that period. This document gives an interesting account of the relations between Assyria and Babylonia in the thirteenth century B.C. Of Shalmanezar I., 1300 B.C., the father of Tugulti-ninip I., several monuments were found. It was previously known that Nineveh was a royal residence in the time of Assur-risilim, 1150 B.C.; but the new monuments of Shalmanezar I. show it to have been such one hundred and fifty years earlier, or in 1300 B.C.. One monument belonging to this king gives an outline of the history of the Temple of Ishtar at Nineveh, showing that it was founded in very early times, and restored by Samsi-vul in the nineteenth century B.C., and was again restored subsequently by Assur-ubalid, king of Assyria, 1400 B.C. Then Mr. Smith had the good fortune to discover an important document of Vul-nirari I., king of Assyria, 1330 B.C. This contemporary document is of the highest value, as "it shows that Assyria at this time had already taken a leading place in the world, and was the most powerful state in Asia" (p. 246). The reign of this monarch was a prosperous one. The document here referred to gives the names of four successive Assyrian monarchs who

¹ With regard to the date of Assurnazirpal's accession to the throne, as well as with regard to the pronunciation of some of these royal names, we follow the volume before us. The Assyrian Canon, however, appears to make the date of Assurnazirpal's accession to be 883 B.C., which date we have adopted in a former Article; see *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. xxxii. p. 326. This change might affect slightly other dates, but it is not essential that the matter be discussed here.

reigned in the fourteenth century B.C., namely, Vul-nirari I. (just mentioned), Budil, 1350 B.C., Bel-nirari, 1370 B.C., and Assur-ubalid, 1400. B.C.

Of the early Babylonian period we have a tablet containing one hundred and fifteen lines of writing belonging to Mero-dach Baladan I., 1320 B.C. In it are mentioned this monarch's father and grandfather. The name of the latter was Kuri-galzu, who reigned 1370 B.C. Inscriptions of this monarch, who was a great and successful prince, are among the new discoveries. Beyond this date, Mr. Smith found texts belonging to Rimagu, and others of Hammurabi, "who lived not later than the sixteenth century before the Christian era." In this period we begin to meet the bilingual inscriptions, one column of a tablet being in the Akkad language and the opposite column in the Semitic-Babylonian. Then, still earlier, we have a document of Dungi, an early Chaldean monarch, who is placed at 2000 B.C. These are contemporary documents. But Mr. Smith found *copies* of ancient texts which give important details of kings and cities and events far back to the twenty-third century B.C. One of these gives a list of six Babylonian kings of very remote times, which were not previously known. From this record we learn that at that early date the offerings made to the gods and their temples were costly and beautiful—robes adorned with gold and purple, and precious stones and diadems. We have been anxious to trace backwards, with great care, both the Assyrian and the Babylonian lines of documents, in order to show where contemporaneous records existed (and this without reference to those which we already possessed in the British Museum), for the reason that Assyriologists have been charged with creating kings and reigns according to their own caprice. Our dated contemporaneous documents go back to 1330 B.C. in one line, and very much farther than that in the other.

THE DELUGE RECORDS.

As it is to this portion of the volume that the majority of readers will turn at once, we therefore limit our notice of

these strange records to a very few lines, and devote our space chiefly to a grouping and elucidation of those facts which have a bearing upon cuneiform studies in general. These inscriptions consist of twelve tablets, of which Mr. Smith found important fragments additional to those already in the British Museum, and their composition belongs to the early Babylonian empire. The long account of these records is full of interesting details, from which we give one or two extracts, as a summary of what they teach. "It appears that at that remote age the Babylonians had a tradition of a flood, which was a divine punishment for the wickedness of the world; and of a holy man who built an ark, and escaped the destruction; who was afterwards translated and dwelt with the gods. They believed in hell, a place of torment under the earth, and heaven a place of glory in the sky; and their description of the two has in several points a striking likeness to those in the Bible. They believed in a soul, or spirit, distinct from the body, which was not destroyed on the death of the mortal frame; and they represent the ghost as rising from the earth at the bidding of one of the gods, and winging its way to heaven" (p. 205). The Chaldean account of the flood, when compared with the biblical narrative of the same, shows that the two stories in their main features essentially agree; "as to the wicked men of the antediluvian world, the divine anger, and command to build the ark, its stocking with birds and beasts, the coming of the deluge, the ark resting on a mountain, trial being made by birds sent out to see if the water had subsided, and the building of an altar after the flood." But an examination of the details shows many points of difference; "as to the number of people who were saved, the duration of the deluge, the place where the ark rested, the order of sending out the birds, and other similar matters" (p. 218). It is a curious fact that a city, named Surippak, which is often mentioned in these legends, situated near the mouth of the Euphrates, is called in another ancient inscription "the ship city," or "city of the ark"; and inscriptions as late as Hammurabi's time call this "the city of

the ark" (p. 212). Mr. Smith has recently discovered that the ancient name of Erech (Gen. x. 10) was *Anak*, or *city of the giant*, perhaps from some connection with Nimrod (p. 206).

NEW ILLUSTRATIONS OF ASSYRIAN ARTS, CUSTOMS, AND SOCIAL LIFE.

The recent discoveries furnish much new material which throws light on the Assyrians in their daily life. From the deeds of sale (B.C. 670) we learn that individuals could hold and convey real property without any reference to the government (p. 415). We find a petition presented to Sennacherib that repairs might be made on certain public buildings (p. 414). There are several illustrations of slavery as it then existed; one of which, dating from 687 B.C., is the sale of a girl by a woman to whom the girl belonged, and who signed the contract for the sale; the price is also stated (p. 417). One inscription, which is a copy of an ancient Babylonian original, shows how careful the people were with regard to justice, and that the kings should both observe and enforce the laws (p. 410). The new fragments of syllabaries are among the most important that have yet been brought to light (pp. 101, 147, 418). Then we have also a variety of new smaller objects of interest, such as a beautiful crystal throne (p. 98); a bronze lamp with two spouts for wicks (p. 140); a curious terra-cotta lamp-feeder, in the shape of a setting bird, through the beak of which the oil was discharged into the lamp (p. 433); a bronze fork, which is described as a beautiful and unique specimen of Assyrian art (p. 147); bronze dishes and ladles, and a bronze bracket; also crystal and alabaster vases, beads, rings, seals, some enamelled bricks, which were painted over with war scenes (p. 79); and in some of the chambers at Nimrud "the walls were colored in horizontal bands of red, green, and yellow on plaster; and where the lower parts of the chambers were panelled with small stone slabs, the plaster and colors were continued over these" (p. 78). Among the bronze articles discovered was a *style*, with which it is supposed the cuneiform clay tablets

were impressed (p. 147; a representation of this is given on p. 434).¹ Among numerous other objects, we notice the two

following: A statue of the god Nebo was found with the dedicatory inscription cut upon the pupil of the eye (p. 385). Then there was a curious tablet containing nine epigraphs for the use of the engraver, who was to put them over the particular sculptures to which they belonged, and which they explained (p. 411).

CONCLUSION.

The reader of Mr. Smith's book needs to bear in mind the fact that what new documents have been there given are but a small part of the inscriptions in the new collection. And especially must he remember that, although this new collection is large in itself, it is, in reality, very small compared with the vast historical treasures that yet remain to be recovered. Mr. Smith has pointed out many places where, doubtless, the results would richly reward the labor of excavation. These excavations must be made before we can complete the chain of history between the sixth and the twenty-fourth centuries before the Christian era. With regard to some of these centuries our knowledge is remarkably full and reliable, while with regard to others it is still defective. Perhaps only the specialist can appreciate the value of the materials which Mr. Smith has recently gathered. The line of firm historical ground has been removed much farther back into the ages than it was before; our knowledge of early Babylonian history has been especially enlarged; important additions have been made to the list of ancient Babylonian kings; we have learned that Assyria gained a prominent place in the world much earlier than was supposed;

¹ In connection with this *style* we may refer to the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. xxxii. p. 338, where we showed, as clearly as it was possible to do without producing the implement itself, that such an instrument must have been used to inscribe the clay tablets; and this against the opinion of some scholars who claimed that the impressions on the Assyrian bricks must have been made with a stamp, as was the case with the Babylonian bricks. The discovery of this *style* is an important confirmation of what was said in the Article referred to.

important data have been brought to light which enable us to understand how the Assyrians and Babylonians arranged the year; and their method of dividing the heavens; and the names of some of the stars in the different divisions have been ascertained. Mr. Smith has been able, with these data, "to fix approximately, and in some cases to identify, about thirty of the principal stars." As these people had observatories in most of the large cities where professional astronomers regularly took observations, which were carefully recorded, it is to be expected that further researches will bring to light many curious and valuable facts illustrative of their knowledge of astronomical science. Furthermore, we get some insight into the myths and traditions which prevailed in the Euphrates valley in those remote times. The tradition of the Deluge is no longer the only important one; but we have now with it a remarkable tradition concerning the Creation, and another concerning the Tower of Babel, and still another concerning the rebellion of angels in heaven. In this connection may be stated an opinion held by the majority of cuneiform scholars, and strikingly confirmed by the new discoveries, that the Semitic people, although very early established in the Euphrates valley, borrowed their civilization, literature, mythology, and science from an older and totally different people, who spoke a language quite distinct from that of all the Semitic tribes. In this region we find, at least two thousand years before the birth of Christ, a high state of civilization, which could not have arisen in a day. And when it is known that important records are still buried in the Assyrian and Babylonian mounds, which might throw light on the history of those remote centuries, the scholar is impatient for the necessary excavations to be made; but until they are made, one can say that the recovery of Babylon, notwithstanding all that has already been done, is a work yet to be accomplished. The multitude of mounds scattered everywhere are evidences that this valley was once crowded with life. "This is the home of man's earliest traditions; it is the land of the Deluge and of the Tower of Babel; and it is the

birth-place of the great race of Israel, which has played so important a part in the religious history of the world" (pp. 1, 2). Professor Curtius, the historian of Greece, has written an elaborate paper showing that the armorial devices of the ancient Greeks came originally from Assyria.¹ Mr. Fergusson writes: "The Assyrian is an entirely new chapter added to our history of architecture, and certainly not one of the least in beauty, not only from its own intrinsic merits and the beauty of many of its forms, but because of its historic value, being the parent of all the Ionic forms we afterwards find so currently and so beautifully blended with the architecture of Greece."² The pre-eminence of Babylonia in the science of astronomy is universally acknowledged; and Mr. Smith says: "It is evident that in every way the classical nations of antiquity borrowed far more from the valley of the Euphrates than from that of the Nile; and Chaldea, rather than Egypt, is the home even of the civilization of Europe."³ Surely the Christian scholar who inquires as to the origin and moulding influences of the people who were the ancestors of his faith, must look away thoughtfully and reverently to this land where there can still be pointed out the birth-place of Abraham, and the site of cities whose history runs back to the days of the flood.

¹ Paper presented to the Academy of Science of Berlin in 1874.

² Illustrated Hand-Book of Architecture, p. 162. London, 1855. See Quarterly Review for Oct. 1859, Vol. cvi. pp. 289-293.

³ Assyrian Discoveries, p. 451.